

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Environment, Safety and Health; Notice of Availability of Funds and Request for Applications To Support Medical Surveillance for Former Department of Energy Workers

AGENCY: Office of Environment, Safety and Health, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Funds and Request for Applications.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) announces the availability of funds to evaluate former workers whose employment at departmental facilities may have placed their long-term health at significant risk. This Request for Applications is a follow on to a more general, annual notice of potential availability of grants and cooperative agreements for epidemiology and other health studies published in the Federal Register (60 FR 50562) on September 29, 1995.

DATES: Applications submitted in response to this announcement must be received by May 15, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for further information and application forms may be directed to Dr. John Peeters, Office of Occupational Medicine and Medical Surveillance (EH-61), U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, Maryland 20874-1290; Telephone: (301) 903-5902; facsimile: (301) 903-5072. Applications may be submitted to Dr. Peeters at the address listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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I. Purpose

Section 3162 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993 (Public Law 102-484) directs the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to develop a program of medical evaluation for current and former DOE workers at significant risk for health problems due to exposures to hazardous or radioactive substances during employment.

Approximately five medical surveillance projects will be funded through cooperative agreements to identify, and, where appropriate, notify and medically screen groups of former workers who are potentially at significant risk for health problems due to work-related exposures. Because medical surveillance for former workers is a highly complex process, DOE is proposing to fund at this time cooperative agreements for a limited number of projects as described below.

Experience with these projects will help DOE to evaluate options for a more comprehensive medical surveillance program for former workers and to determine how such a program can be effectively integrated with other ongoing site activities.

II. Project Description

DOE intends to award approximately five cooperative agreements with specific goals. The goals of the projects are to:

- <bullet> Identify groups of workers at significant risk for occupational diseases.
- <bullet> Notify members of these risk groups.
- <bullet> Offer these workers medical screening that can lead to medical interventions.

Each cooperative agreement will potentially have two phases. Phase I will be a needs assessment. Phase II will be the implementation of medical screening.

There will be approximately five awards totalling about \$2.5 million for phase I. Phase I will take approximately 12 months. Phase II could continue up to 4 years, renewable annually. The award continuation for phase II, if made, will be based on the results from phase I, the availability of funds, and negotiation of the costs for phase II. Only those who participate in phase I will be eligible to participate in phase II.

Phase I

During phase I, the applicants will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. The needs assessment will include a review of existing site-specific information and other means to initially identify the

most significant radiation and nonradiation exposures. During phase I, investigators will:

1. Identify existing information relevant to exposure and health outcomes among former workers;
2. Utilize this information to identify or develop viable methods for contacting these former workers;
3. Provide an initial determination of the most significant worker hazards, problems and concerns for each site;
4. Identify approaches for conducting the project in partnership with unions, site management, operating contractors, community representatives, and State and local health officials; and
5. Attend semiannual DOE-coordinated meetings of investigators to share information on ongoing needs assessments.

During phase I, investigators will develop a detailed plan and proposed budget for phase II focusing on the groups of workers at significant risk for health effects. This plan for phase II is expected at least 60 days prior to the conclusion of phase I. Phase I will conclude with delivery of the needs assessment to DOE.

Phase II

DOE will determine the need for phase II activities and will support these efforts through continuation awards to phase I participants for new budget periods. Where phase II plans are approved by DOE, the investigators will:

1. Identify and locate those former workers who based on their actual or probable exposure history are "at risk";
2. Ascertain the health concerns of former workers identified in task 1 related to their past DOE employment;
3. Communicate risk information to former workers regarding the nature of their health risk and discuss the actions that could be taken;
4. Provide medical screening to targeted former worker populations based on exposure history and the availability of acceptable screening tests;
5. Assist in the coordination of referrals, diagnostic workup, and followup treatment, including the coordination with workman's compensation and other existing insurance and benefits programs;
6. Ensure dialogue with local parties concerned with the project;
7. Evaluate former workers satisfaction with the project; and
8. Attend semiannual DOE-coordinated meetings of investigators to share information on ongoing screening programs.

Potential Sites

Applicants for the cooperative agreements will propose individual (or alternative groups of) DOE sites for study and justify the factors in site(s) selection. Such factors should consider:

1. The presence of existing worker and community health programs;
2. Availability of information on former workers and their exposures;
3. The levels and types of exposures;
4. The number of former workers and access to them;
5. The concerns of workers about specific past exposures;
6. The concerns of DOE site managers and operating contractors about specific past exposures; and
7. The concerns of both national and local unions about past exposures.

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III. Applications

This Notice of Availability is issued pursuant to DOE regulations contained in 10 CFR Part 602: Epidemiology and Other Health Studies Financial Assistance Program, as published in the Federal Register on January 31, 1995 (60 FR 5841). The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for 10 CFR part 602 is 81.108, and its solicitation control number is EOHSFAP 10 CFR part 602. 10 CFR 602 contains the specific requirements for applications, evaluation, and selection criteria. Only those applications following these specific criteria and forms will be considered. Application forms may be obtained at the address cited above. Applications will be peer reviewed by evaluators apart from DOE employees and contractors as described under section 10 CFR 602.9(c), and submission of an application constitutes agreement that this is acceptable to the investigator(s) and the submitting institution.

IV. Proposal Format

The proposal shall contain two sections, technical and cost. Technical proposals shall be no more than fifty (50) pages in length; resumes of proposed key personnel should be submitted as an appendix to the technical proposal and will not be counted against the page limit. Cost proposals shall have no page limit. Because each project will be conducted in two phases, and the scope of phase II is dependent on the results of phase I, the technical description for phase II may be less specific than that for phase I, but must clearly demonstrate a capability to conduct phase II. It is left to the proposer to determine

how best to structure the proposal. However, the following information shall be included:

a. Proposals shall include a detailed project description that discusses the specific tasks to be performed under the proposed project. At a minimum, the tasks listed under section II above must be described. The project description must include clear statements of what is not known and what is uncertain, as well as statements of what is known. The project description must describe how independent, external peer review of the results of the project will be conducted. The project description must demonstrate that the offeror has the ability to integrate their work with the activities of other organizations conducting medical surveillance activities.

b. Proposals must demonstrate the competency of research personnel and the adequacy of resources. Proposals must demonstrate that the offeror is perceived as neutral and credible, and is capable of conducting scientifically valid and responsible medical surveillance projects.

Proposals must demonstrate that the offeror has the experience and capability to plan, organize, manage, and facilitate worker and union participation in planning and execution. Proposals must also demonstrate that the offeror has the experience and ability to effectively communicate complicated scientific information on potential risks and uncertainties, to workers, local and national stakeholders, concerned citizens, and decision makers at all levels. Proposals must demonstrate that the offeror presently has or is capable of obtaining staff with the training, expertise, and experience needed to conduct scientifically complex needs, assessments and medical surveillance programs. Proposals must identify the technical and scientific staff that will actually conduct the studies and detail their professional experience, as well as their level of program involvement. Proposals must demonstrate that the offeror has capability, for both financial and scientific management, and a demonstrated skill in planning and scheduling projects of comparable magnitude to those proposed under this Request for Applications.

c. The cost proposal must include a summary breakdown of all costs, and provide a detailed breakdown of costs on a task-by-task basis for each task contained in the project description. Any expectation concerning cost sharing must be clearly stated. Cost sharing is encouraged, but it will not be considered in the selection process.

V. Evaluation Criteria

DOE will evaluate applications based upon the following criteria in 10 CFR 602.9(d) that are listed in descending order of importance:

1. The scientific and technical merit of the proposed research;

2. The appropriateness of the proposed method or approach;
3. Competency of research personnel and adequacy of proposed resources; and
4. Reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget.

VI. DOE's Role

In order for DOE to utilize cooperative agreements for these medical surveillance projects, there must be substantial involvement between DOE and any awardee(s). DOE established the core tasks for these projects and prepared this Federal Register Notice of Availability. DOE will conduct the selection and award process, which will include evaluations by persons outside the Federal government. DOE will evaluate the results of phase I and, where warranted, authorize and fund phase II. DOE will facilitate awardee access to the target sites and exposure records. DOE will establish requirements and controls for data collection and handling. DOE will consult with project investigators and coordinate semiannual meetings. DOE will interact with an independent advisory group that will provide advice to DOE and to project investigators.

Finally, DOE will monitor and evaluate the results of the projects, including the participant's level of satisfaction, to determine how these pilots could be expanded to other groups of former workers both at the project sites and at other DOE sites. In addition to helping former workers, information gained from these projects will contribute to DOE's ongoing efforts to improve health and safety programs for current workers.

VII. Applicants

Applicants for the cooperative agreements could include domestic nonprofit and for profit organizations, universities, medical centers, research institutions, other public and private organizations, including State and local governments, labor unions and other employee representative groups, and small, minority and/or women-owned businesses. Consortia of interested organizations are encouraged to apply. Awardees for each project will work cooperatively with former workers, DOE site officials, DOE operating contractors, labor organizations, health officials, and designated community representatives.

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Paul J. Seligman,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Studies.
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